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THE CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWS LETTER

VOLUME I
NUMBER I

FEBRUARY, 1954

HENRY JACOB AND THE CHURCH AT WEST BARNSTABLE

ARTHUR HOWE BRADFORD

ON HENRY JACOB SUNDAY, observed in August each year, the church people in West Barnstable, Massachusetts, recall the memory of their founder in an anniversary meeting. On this occasion, also, they rededicate themselves to service in their church and, specifically, to finishing the rebuilding of their house of worship so that it shall once again look as it did in the year 1717. That original meeting house was a noble structure " standing away from the village upon a commanding hill, with its tower rising directly from the ground, surmounted by a wonderful weathervane." When the old building is fully restored, Congregationalism will have a precious shrine, its oldest meeting house in original form, symbol of the Pilgrim Faith and Spirit.

Henry Jacob never came to the place where his people worshiped on Cape Cod. No more did John Robinson come to Plymouth. Nevertheless, both these great men were with their people always, in spirit, honored, beloved and recognized as leaders, going on before into the New Day and the New World.

Henry Jacob, a native of Kent, England, was a graduate of Oxford. He began his ministry in the Church of England, but, in his quest for religious freedom, he gave up his living, went to Holland, learned to share John Robinson's views on church polity, returned to England in 1616 and organized the church in Southwark.

From there he came to Virginia and died there. Under the leadership of his successor, John Laythrop, thirty-four members of the Southwark church came to Cape Cod, by way of Boston and Scituate, to found the town of Barnstable in the year 1639. And there in 1646 they built their first small cabin meeting house.

I want to recall a picture, if I may, to help us see the truth that lies behind the facts. In this picture we see a little group of individuals, gathered in a private dwelling, in Southwark, in that year 1616, for the very first meeting of the church which was to become the church of West Barnstable. From the record we read that persons by the names of Browne, Prior, Almey, Allen, Gilbert, Farre and Goodal, were present. " These, with others, having observed a day of solemn fasting and prayer for a blessing upon their undertaking, towards the close of the solemnity, each of them made open confession of their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ: and then, standing together, they joined hands, and solemnly covenanted with each other in the presence of Almighty God, to walk together in all God's ways and ordinances, according as He had already revealed, or should further make them known to them. Mr. Jacob was then chosen pastor by the suffrage of the brotherhood, and others were appointed to the office of deacons, with fasting and prayer and imposition of hands."

That was the beginning of the first Congregational church gathered as an ecclesiastical organization on English soil. If any one man deserves the name of founder of

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Congregationalism, as we know it, Henry Jacob is the man. With John Robinson and the Pilgrim Fathers we have here in reality, whatever we may call them, the Saints of our Free Church Fellowship.

LOCAL CHURCH HISTORIANS

There is a wide field of opportunity for a local church historian in gathering material concerning the work of the church, its past and its present, and to give attention to its proper safekeeping. The Society now has the names and addresses of some thirty persons, and there is every reason to believe that there are many more. Churches that have not yet appointed a church historian are urged to do this and to send the name and address also to the Society's office. It is hoped to plan some conferences for these officials to consider the development of a better program for the conservation of our heritage.

NATIONAL COUNCIL EARLY RECORDS

When the Connecticut Conference recently moved into its new conference building there were found in the vault of the old quarters the original manuscript of the minutes of the 1871 and 1874 National Council Meetings, long considered lost. The 1871 Council was the organizing meeting of the Council.

THREE RESEARCH PROJECTS

Persons having information, books or papers related to the following assignments kindly communicate with the leader in charge of the research project:

The Christian Church—Dr. Warren H. Denison, 632 Broad Street, Grinnell, Iowa.

The Evangelical Protestant Church—Dr. Charles William Hanko, Dept. of History and Economics, Brooklyn I technic Inst., Brooklyn, N. Y.

The Congregational Methodist Ch — Rev. A. Goff Bedford, Langdale,

A WORD FROM THE TREASU

Rev. John A. Harrer, Treasure ported the balance December 31, 1 $758.06; Expenses, 1953, $4,730.40. ceipts, contributions, 3 national age $2,000; 27 conferences $1,050; churches $1,373; 14 individuals $11 total income $4,756.28. Balance De ber 31, 1953, $783.94.

CHAIRMAN OF FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. P. Donald Folwell, Chairma Finance Committee, has announced his committee meeting in Clevel Ohio, January 26th, approved the fol ing budget: rent $426; tel. and tel. $ postage $270; supplies $150; meet $350; printing $400; secretarial $2, secretary $1,500; incidentals $144— $5,500, an increase of $500 over bu for 1953, due to higher cost of rent, age, printing and supplies.

ECONOMY OF THE FATHERS

From town records of Westford, M March 7, 1770 (day of the "Boston M sacre"): "Voted, that the commi appointed to underpin the new meet house shall take as many of the st now under the old meetinghouse as think proper."

Are we like minded to preserve useful and valuable of the old?

FINDS

Recently there has come news of interesting finds. The first, reporte the New York Times, is of the disco of the ancient Communion Servic

the First Church of Canandaigua, N. Y., in the basement of a local bank.

The second is of the finding of the minutes of a Connecticut church for its first thirty years, under a pile of old linen in the bottom drawer of a discarded dresser in an unused attic.

Do you know where your church treasures and records are?

CHURCH ANNIVERSARIES

One hundred eighty-five churches reach an anniversary date this year. (See Advance, January '54, for list.) A worthy observation of this date can be a red-letter date in the history of the church. These churches have all been provided with helpful material and, where desired, programs used in other churches in the recent past. The office desires two copies of the program and other historical papers from every church celebrating its anniversary.

STRENGTHENING OUR FELLOWSHIP

A concern for its history by the local church is basic to its full and fruitful life. A knowledge of the labors and victories of the past is an essential part of the foundation of its strength and character. The strength of our denomination rests upon the vitality and faith of our local churches; and measures our worth to Christian unity and to the Ecumenical Church in which we all believe and for which we all work and pray.

We believe, as did our Fathers, in the freedom of the local church and of the denomination as a whole. Our Fathers taught, as the English Congregationalists insist today, Independency of the churches is freedom from Governmental interference, not freedom from each other. In union there is strength provided the units are themselves strong. The Historical Society, therefore, stresses the need of a lively sense of the value of its history by the local church. F. L. F.

WANTED: BOOKS, INFORMATION

There is urgent need of copies of the following:

Minutes of the National Council of 1865.
Records of the Albany Convention, 1853.
Buck's Ecclesiastical Law in Mass.
Miller's Orthodoxy in New England.

Anyone having any information concerning Rev. Chauncey Rice, pastor Poughkeepsie, 1854-1860, or Rev. Alonzo Barnard, pastor Benzonia, Mich., 1845, kindly send to the Secretary of the Society.

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AN INTRODUCTION T[illegible]E NEWS LETTER

This first News Letter should not end without recording for all to read the su financial foundation of the Congregational Christian Historical Society. Nor shou it close without an expression of heartiest thanks to the national agencies, conferenc churches and the friends who have so generously supported it.

Each year more donors have expressed satisfaction with its purpose and progr by sending contributions and so becoming associate members. Each year our Sec tary has seen to it that expenses stayed within income.

It is hoped that this News Letter, which will be issued quarterly, will make ma more people acquainted with the Society. The Board of Governors has authorize plan to enroll individual members of the Society with a $5 annual sustaining me bership fee. Will you kindly send us the names and addresses of friends to wh invitations to join the Society may be sent. We are especially eager to welcome su persons as individual sustaining members, and we hope many more churches well will join in the support of this worthy project.

The Congregational Christian churches were late in starting an historical socie There is much to be done, much time to be made up. If you would like to see t past brought before the present and the present secured for the future; in a word you have a liking for history, you will appreciate this News Letter and all it sta for. And we welcome you as one of us.

HELEN KENYON, *Chairman Public Relations*

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The Purpose *of the Congregational Christian Historical Society is to cultivate a deeper interest in the history of the Congregational Christian Churches in all its aspects, and a greater awareness of the importance of Congregational Christian recorded history as a source of information and of inspiration, and as a basis for future action.*

Prof. Stillson Judah
Pacific School of Religion
1798 Scenic Ave.
Berkeley 9, Calif.

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